

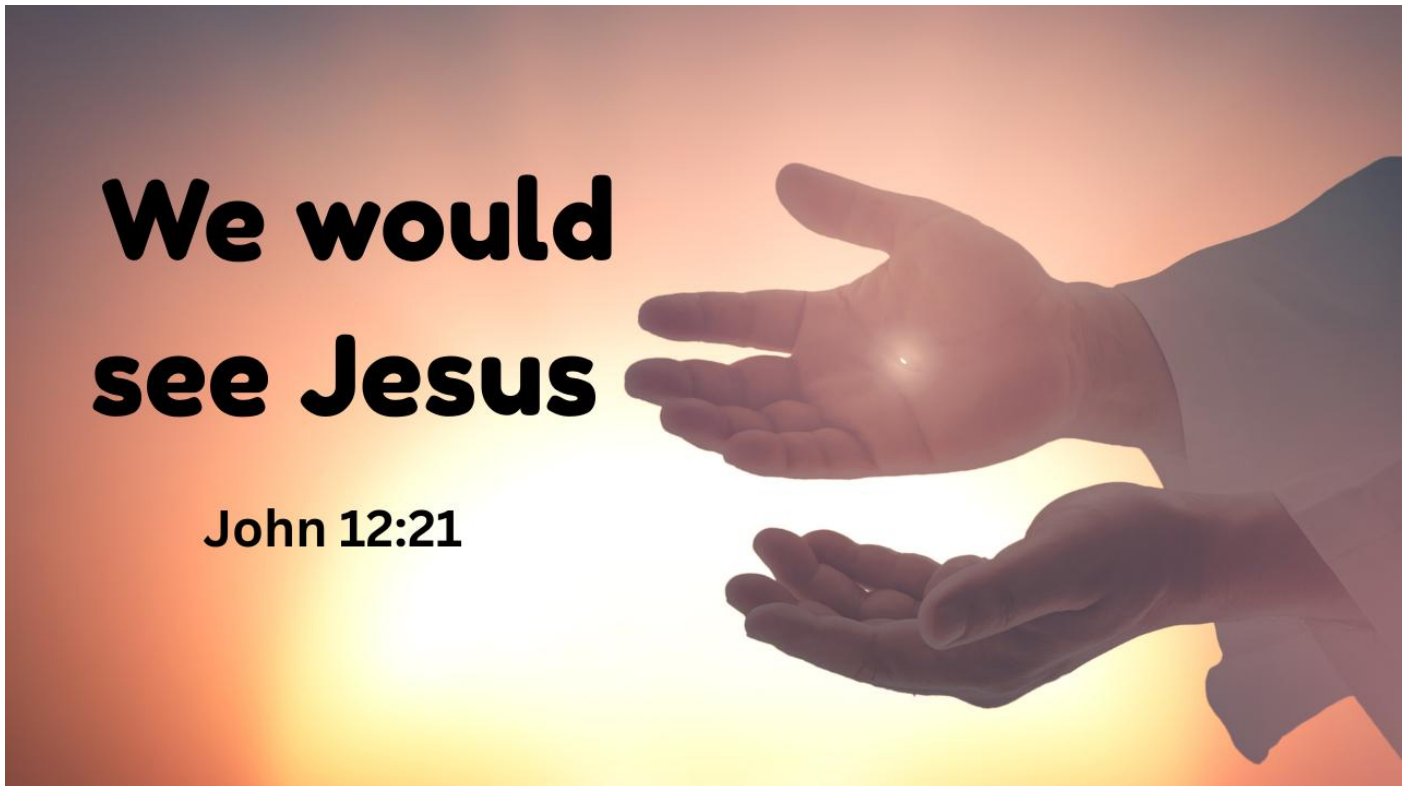
## Exhortation: “Seeing Jesus, Faith and Contentment,”

Exhortation at Birkdale Ecclesia, 19 April, 2026

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Brothers and sisters, In John 12.21, we read of a simple request:

**“Sir, we would see Jesus.”**



That request really captures why we are here this morning. We’re not here just out of routine. We’re not here simply to remember biblical and spiritual facts. We are here... to see him. **But what does that actually mean?**

Because **seeing Jesus is more than knowing about him**. More than being familiar with the accounts of his life and sacrifice. To truly see Jesus... is to understand how he lived—and to choose to follow in that way.

**We Would See Jesus** - This is the first line of one of our hymns (270).<sup>1</sup>

- We haven’t seen him with our eyes, not in that despised Nazareth.
- We weren’t there at the cross where he implored “forgive, they know not what they do”
- We were not at the upper room and
- We didn’t stand at the empty tomb where his scared body once lay
- We were not among the few who saw him ascend through the clouds

And yet—

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<sup>1</sup> A recording of the Adelphian Singers performing this hymn can be [viewed by clicking here](#). The video can be [downloaded by clicking here](#).

- We believe His footsteps trod in Nazareth's streets
- We believe the deed was done that shook the earth and veiled the sun
- We believe at the empty tomb – angels said “Why seek the living with the dead”
- We also believe that faithful word and we faithfully wait for his return

But if we're honest, sometimes our vision of him becomes blurred or numbed. Life has a way of doing that. We all carry things—pressures, worries, health struggles, relationship challenges. And these things can quietly take over our thinking, so that instead of seeing Jesus our master clearly, we find ourselves focusing on everything else. **And that's where our faith is tested is it not?**

Brothers and sisters, we know the words well from Heb 11:

**“Faith is the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen.”**

But if we're honest with ourselves ... our faith doesn't always feel **strong** does it. Some days, everything feels steady. Clear. Certain. And other days... it can feel like we're just holding on by our finger nails.

Perhaps a simple analogy helps us here. It's a bit like driving a car. When the road is dry and straight, everything feels easy. You're in control. You're confident. But when the road becomes wet... or slippery... suddenly it's a different story. You grip the wheel tighter. You slow down. You feel the instability.

And that's what our walk can be like. When life is calm, our faith feels strong. But when the pressures come—when the “boisterous wind” rises—we can begin to struggle. **We remember Peter**. He steps out of the boat in faith. He walks toward the Lord. And for a moment—he does the impossible. But then... he looks at the wind. And fear replaces faith. And he begins to sink. And the words of the Lord gently challenge him: “O thou of little faith, wherefore didst thou doubt?”

**And if we're honest... that's us.** Not because we don't believe. But because we get distracted. Distracted by the very real things of life: our finances our health our relationships our many responsibilities. These things are not imaginary—they are real, pressing, and quite often heavy. And because they are so immediate... they can quietly take centre place in our minds. **Until, before we realise it, God has slipped into the background.**

And yet here is something we need to gently remind ourselves of: Our personal struggles are not separate from our faith. They are the very place where our faith is being worked out. Every challenge... Every worry... Every moment of pressure... And these are our opportunity to either look at the wind and falter—Or to keep our eyes on Christ.

However, if and when we look at that wind and we begin to sink, like Peter did, there is something deeply comforting: He cried out, **“Lord, save me.”** And immediately... the Lord reached out His hand. So it is with us. We may falter. We may struggle. Our faith may feel faint at times. But our Father is patient. And our Lord is near. So perhaps the encouragement for us this morning is simple:

**When the winds rise—don't focus on the storm. Lift your eyes again. And hold on. Because faith is not about never struggling... It is about continuing to look to Him, especially when we do. In those moments wherever we find ourselves, there is something very comforting we are reminded of: God is RIGHT.**

**Let us remember - God makes no mistakes.** Not with our lives. Not with our struggles. Not with our pain. Not with our story. Not with our timing. We are not a random moment in history or an accident or misprint. God does not need our circumstances to make sense to us, in order for His plan to work. God is not confused as to where we are – HE has placed us in this very time and place. And the very things we wish we could remove from our life—are often the things the He is using to shape and refine us.

**God is right.**

**Think of Job.** He lost everything—and yet he said, “**Blessed be the name of the LORD.**” That kind of faith doesn’t come from understanding everything. It comes from trusting God.

And when we look to Jesus, when we see Jesus, we see the perfect example. He spoke of himself as a grain of wheat— In John 12.24 we read:

**“Except a corn of wheat fall into the ground and die, it abideth alone: but if it die, it bringeth forth much fruit.”**

It’s a simple image—but a profound one. If a grain remains as it is—untouched, protected, reserved—it stays alone. It produces nothing. But if it is given—if it is buried, it brings forth life. And that is the principle of discipleship. Not holding on to self... but giving ourselves to God’s purpose.

And that goes against everything natural to us. Because naturally, we want to protect ourselves. We want comfort. We want control. We want things to go the way we want the way – WE expect. But Jesus shows us a different way. Because he didn’t choose the easy path. As he looked ahead to what was coming—the suffering, the rejection, the cross—we are told his soul was troubled.

And yet, what does he say? John 12.27. “**For this cause came I unto this hour.**” He understood his purpose. And even though it was hard... he embraced it. That is what it means to truly see Jesus. **To see not just his miracles...but his mindset.** A complete surrender to the will of his Father.

And then we come to one of the most beautiful and practical lessons—John 13. The disciples are gathered together. And what has been on their minds? Not sacrifice. Not service. But status. Who was the greatest? Who matter the most? And again—if we’re honest—that’s typical human nature, is it not? We may not say it out loud...but we often do it. We often compare ourselves with others and measure ourselves against those around us.

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So back to that moment with the disciples gathered together.... Jesus does something unforgettable. **He rises... takes a towel... and begins to wash their feet.** Quietly. Humbly. Lovingly. No speech. No correction or rebuke. **Just action.**

And you can imagine the silence in that room. The Master... the Son of God... doing the lowest of tasks. **And in that moment, he redefines what greatness is.** It is Not status. Not recognition. Not being seen. **But service.** Jesus said ye also ought to wash one another’s feet. For I have given you an example that ye should do as I have done to you.

How it must have shamed the disciples! The Master stooped and did what the others felt too self-important to do. They were completely absorbed in seeking for greatness and pre-eminence. Jesus

entered the world through the gates of lowliness, and departed from it in cheerfully-accepted rejection, abuse and shame. [Dying in public disgrace as a common criminal.](#)

He came not to be ministered unto, but to minister, and to give his life a ransom for many. A life of faith. A life of trust. A life given for others. That was his life. Given. Humbled. Poured out.

And we are called to respond to “see Jesus”. Let’s look to Jesus to strengthen our faith when it feels weak or compromised. To trust God even when life doesn’t make sense. To be content with what our Father provides.

### **And above all—To keep our eyes fixed on Jesus.**

To truly see Jesus... is to understand how he lived—and to choose to follow that way. And yet, as we think about that standard—we also know something else. We don’t always live up to it. We try... but we fall short. We start with good intentions... but we struggle. And often, quietly, we can feel discouraged.

However.....

### **“We would see Jesus.” in these emblems on the table.**

#### **A powerful principle**

Brothers and sisters, going back to that powerful principle given to us in Scripture: 1 Tim 6.6

#### **“Godliness with contentment is great gain.”**

It’s a short verse... but it cuts right to the heart of how we are to live. Because when we think about what the world calls “gain”... it’s very different, isn’t it? The world says: chase more, earn more, be more, have more ... Have More money. More comfort. More success. More recognition.

[And quietly, without even realising it, those ideas can creep into our thinking and way of life.](#)

We can fall into the trap of measuring our lives by: how things are going, what we have, what we’ve achieved, how secure we feel and how we compare to others around us.

And yet, the Word of God brings us back to something much simpler... and much deeper. Not success. Not control. Not comfort. **But contentment.** And that’s something the world does not understand.

#### **Because contentment doesn’t come from having everything. It comes from trusting God... IN everything.**

Paul continues with words in verse 7 that are incredibly grounding:

#### **“We brought nothing into this world, and it is certain we can carry nothing out.” 1Tim 6.7**

When you really stop and think about that—it cuts through everything. All the stress. All the striving. All the comparison. Everything we spend so much time worrying about... is temporary. We arrived with nothing. And we leave with nothing. [And suddenly, the question changes. Instead of asking, “What do I have?” We need to ask, “Who am I becoming before God?”](#)

And then comes this simple instruction in verse 8:

#### **“Having food and raiment, let us be therewith content.” 1 Tim 6.8**

Isn't that a radical way to live? Because it goes completely against our natural thinking. We tend to think: "I'll be content when..." when things settle down for us, when our finances improve, when our health is better, when our lives feels easier. But Scripture says—**be content now.**

Not because everything is perfect... But because God is present. And this is where contentment connects deeply with our faith. Because contentment is not about circumstances—it's about trust.

Trust that God knows where we are. Trust that He understands what we are carrying. Trust that He is working with us, even when we don't see it. As we were reminded:

- God makes no mistakes as we looked at earlier.
- Not with our life.
- Not with our situation.
- Not with our struggles.

And let us remember – something that particularly hits home with me. That even the things we would choose to remove... may be the very things God is using to shape us. That's not easy to accept. But it is deeply comforting when we believe it. **Because it means: we are not forgotten, we are not overlooked and we are not walking alone.**

And when we look at Scripture, we see this lived out. Among the faithful, there were both rich and poor. Some had great wealth—like Abraham, Job, and King Solomon. Others lived very simply—being shepherds, fishermen, & labourers.

And yet, what stands out is not what they had... **but how they lived.** Because whether they had much or little, they did not let it take the place of God.

- They remained faithful.
- They remained content.
- Their trust was not in riches—but in God.

Showing us that true richness is not measured in what we possess...**but in our faith.**

And there is a clear warning that comes with this. As we are told: "The love of money is the root of all evil" 1 Timothy 6:10 Not money itself—**but the love of it.**

Because when money, possessions, or comfort begin to take priority over our walk with God...

- when they shape our decisions...
- when they affect how we treat our brethren and sisters...
- when they pull us away from a godly way of life...

that is when it becomes a danger.

So the issue is not whether we have much or little— but whether God remains first. Because contentment is found, **not in what we hold... but in holding fast to Him.**

Now, let's face it— Contentment doesn't mean we don't feel pressure. It doesn't mean life is easy. We all have different things we carry as a heavy baggage: physical and mental health challenges, financial strain, family concerns, emotional burdens. And at times, these things can feel quite overwhelming and might I just say can be spiritually life threatening.

But here is the gentle reminder for us: These things are not outside of God's care. They are within it. As we saw in the life of Job—He lost everything. And yet, he remained faithful. Not because he understood everything...But because **he trusted God**.

And so contentment begins to look like this:

- Peace instead of pressure.
- Gratitude instead of frustration.
- Trust instead of anxiety.

Not because life is easy...But because our God is faithful. And when we live with this contentment this peace—it changes everything. We stop clinging so tightly to this life. We stop measuring everything by what we have. And instead...We begin preparing for what is to come. A life beyond this one. A Kingdom that does not fade. A hope that is sure.

And that brings us to seeing Jesus – our master, and the captain of our salvation. Because he is the perfect example of this principle.

- He did not seek wealth.
- He did not seek comfort.
- He did not seek status.

He lived a life of complete trust in his Father. And ultimately—he gave everything. Like the grain of wheat that falls into the ground...his life was given so that others might live.

And so as we come to the bread and the wine, we are reminded of what truly matters. Not what we possess. But what has been given. A life laid down. A sacrifice made. A love that never fails.

So perhaps the question for us is this:

- Are we learning contentment? Not perfectly—but genuinely?
- Are we trusting God in our circumstances? Do we have faith?
- Are we focusing on what really matters? Can we see Jesus?

“godliness with contentment”...is not a small thing. **It is great gain.**

### **Let us Never give up.**

Because our **God is a faithful God and He never gives up on us**. When we look through Scripture, we see it again and again.

- **Saul**—a man who persecuted the believers—becomes Paul, a faithful apostle.
- **Manasseh**—one of the most wicked kings—finds restoration.
- **Israel**—again and again—wanders, fails, turns away...

And yet, God calls them back. Why? Because God is patient.

We are reminded:

**“The Lord... is not willing that any should perish.”**

Even when we falter...Even when our faith wavers...Even when we feel like we've failed... **He remains faithful.**



Let us be persistent. Let us Keep going. Let us Keep trusting. Let us Keep turning back to Him. Again... and again... and again.

In these simple emblems before us—we see everything we have spoken about.

- A life not held onto... but given.
- Like the grain of wheat—his life was laid down, that it might bring life to many.
- A life of humility—washing feet, serving others.
- A life of obedience—As Christ said “for this cause came I unto this hour.”

We are reminded: This is what it means to see Jesus. Not just to remember him...But to follow him. To live lives of quiet service. To trust God’s purpose. To keep going, even when it’s hard.

**So, in seeing Jesus – let us keep our eyes on him and have faith with contentment. And whatever comes at us - never give up.**

